

From the local, district, and national levels, George J. Kourpias has served the working men and women of the Machinists for decades, but his legacy will stretch far beyond them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I honor George Kourpias for a lifetime of commitment to the men and women he served. I know the Machinists will find someone equally dedicated to succeed him, but in a larger sense, they will never be able to find someone to replace him. George Kourpias is that special kind of person who has devoted his life to the proposition that the men and women who work to make this country great deserve a fair reward for their labors.

Mr. Speaker, I wish George and his wife June all the best in retirement and thank him for the service he has provided to this Nation.

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. BENNETT  
WALKER SMITH, SR.

**HON. JACK QUINN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 19, 1997*

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor the Rev. Dr. Bennett W. Smith, Sr., Pastor of St. John Baptist Church on his twenty-five years of dedicated and outstanding service to our community.

In addition to his duties with the St. John Baptist Church in Buffalo, Pastor Smith serves as president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., upon being elected to that high honor in August 1994. As president, Pastor Smith provides leadership and guidance to its 3 million members.

As Pastor, Bennett Smith leads the St. John Baptist Church, a 2,700 member congregation, and has emerged as world-renowned evangelist and author.

Pastor Smith has truly served our Western New York community through many charitable endeavors, including the construction of McCauley Gardens, housing for low-income families; the St. John Baptist Church Education wing; and a full-time Christian day school. Further, Pastor Smith's Leadership has brought to our community the Board of Christian Education, Senior Citizens Fellowship, Junior and Senior Youth Fellowship, Youth Church, Prison Outreach Ministry, Singles Ministry, a radio-television broadcast, and Project Gift, an after-school program for youth with special needs.

He has also served in numerous local and national organizations for the betterment of mankind, including a national board member and local chairman of the Virginia-Michigan Housing Development Fund, the Sheehan Memorial Hospital Board of Directors, Buffalo Metropolitan Ministries, the Council of Churches, and the NAACP and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

In recognition of that commitment to our community, Rev. Dr. Smith has received the Buffalo News Citizen of the Year award, and the prestigious Grammy Award for his famous sermon, "Watch them Dogs." He has also had the high honor of serving as an official election observer in the first free election in South Africa, and has published the widely acclaimed Handbook on Tithing.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring Rev. Dr. Smith's superlative achievements to

the attention of my colleagues in the House, and ask that they join me in expressing our heartfelt appreciation and enthusiastic congratulations to Pastor Bennett Walker Smith, Sr., as he celebrates his 25th year of outstanding service in Western New York and throughout the world.

THE NATIONAL RAILROAD HALL  
OF FAME—HONORING THE MEN  
AND WOMEN WHO BUILT THE  
RAILROAD

**HON. LANE EVANS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 19, 1997*

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the history and tradition of the Railroad Industry in America. On June 27 and 28, millions of Americans across the country will celebrate Railroad Day by recognizing the American Railroad Industry and its rich history in this country.

Today, I recognize the memory of the men and women who actively participated in the founding and development of the railroad industry—surveyors, mechanics, engineers, teachers, railroad leaders, miners, financiers, inventors, and government leaders. The railroad industry has had a tremendous influence on American society, impacting the economy, science and technology, national defense, and most important, the transportation of our Nation's citizens.

In order to preserve the memory of the efforts of these people, the community of Galesburg, Illinois is erecting a monument dedicated to the accomplishments and contribution of the railroad industry. I have introduced legislation, H. Res. 172 to express the support of this House for this important endeavor. The establishment of a National Railroad Hall of Fame in Galesburg, IL, is a fitting and just reward to a community that has made significant contributions to the railroad industry.

The National Railroad Hall of Fame will be a privately funded museum and research facility dedicated to promote and encourage a better understanding of the origins and growth of the railroad industry. It will recognize the contributions of the men and women who actively participated in the founding and development of the American railroads. A library and collection of materials that document and preserves the accomplishments and contributions of the railroad industry will also be housed at the proposed facility.

Please join me in recognizing the great value of the railroad industry and its workers have to this country. Please help me celebrate Railroad Days and the importance of the people who built the industry by cosponsoring H. Res. 172, the National Railroad Hall of Fame.

TRIBUTE TO THE COLUMBIA  
GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 19, 1997*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to a place that is un-

paralleled in its beauty and wonder, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in the Pacific Northwest. With its abundant natural beauty, unique economic development opportunities, and cultural significance, the Columbia River Gorge is a national treasure.

The Gorge stretches 85 miles along the Columbia River from the dry eastern region to the dense conifer forests and surging creeks of the west, dazzling wildflower displays, including species found nowhere else on Earth, cover hillsides and plateaus along the river. Diverse ecosystems within the scenic area range from temperate rain forests to arid, pine-oak woodlands.

The scenic beauty of this area offers high-value, low-impact recreational opportunities for biking, hiking, windsurfing, and sightseeing to entertain residents and tourists. Multnomah Falls, the single most visited attraction in the National Forest system, is one of the region's many notable sites. These attractions, combined with the region's role as a source of the Northwest's renowned apples, pears, and cherries, allow unique opportunities to balance this valuable ecosystem with the pressures of economic development.

The region also has a rich cultural heritage dating back to tribal life of 10,000 years ago. Ancient petroglyphs and village sites bear witness to thousands of years of Indian life and commerce. The Gorge figured prominently in the journals of Lewis and Clark, and later, travelers on the Oregon Trail navigated the area.

The unparalleled beauty and geologic wonder of this area inspired Congress to pass the National Scenic Area Act in 1986. It was designed to protect the unique natural resources of the Gorge, while at the same time developing a sustainable economy for an area that had been economically depressed. The act promotes shared responsibility by Federal and local entities for land-use and natural resource management and regional economic development. Since the signing of the act, positive progress has been made toward that goal. Gorge economic development projects have spawned new jobs and increased diversification of the region's economy. The scope of public recreation has been increased through new trails and parks in the Gorge. Over 28,000 acres of wildlife and plant habitat and scenic vistas are now publicly owned. Conferences and workshops have been held to encourage and provide citizens and residents of the Gorge with the skills to take action in their own communities. Thanks to the commitment and effort of Northwesterners, the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the Gorge will continue to be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

Oregonians recently honored the Columbia Gorge during Gorge Appreciation Week in May organized by Friends of the Gorge, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of this incredible natural resource. This tradition was begun last year in honor of the 10-year anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. Oregonians showed their appreciation of and commitment to the Gorge by participating in a series of restoration and cleanup projects. This year, over 200 volunteers undertook the job of repairing the damage done to the region by last winter's ice storms. In addition, they worked to restore native plants, re-establish wetlands, clean up the historic Columbia River